

Glenda Wiles

From: Doug Soehren [dsoehren@bresnan.net]
Sent: Tuesday, May 27, 2008 7:37 AM
To: Glenda Wiles
Cc: Planning
Subject: FOB's position statement on the 8 mile rd. subdivisions variance requests

Esteemed Commissioners and Planning Staff,

As we understand it, agents for Morado Mtn. and Sand Hill Ridge have asked for identical variances to subdivision regulations which will allow them to pave 3.9 miles of substandard county road (without upgrading to standards) and pay only two thirds (\$600,000) of the cost. Ravalli County taxpayers like us will have to pay the rest (\$300,000). We oppose taxpayer funds being used to subsidize subdivisions. They are very profitable and should pay for themselves.

Based on our understanding of the Montana Constitution, subdivision regulations and the recommendations of the Planning Board your legal obligation is to deny these requests.

We want what the Montana Constitution guarantees us:

"Section 1. Protection and improvement.

- (1) The state and each person shall maintain and improve a clean and healthful environment in Montana for present and future generations.
- (2) The legislature shall provide for the administration and enforcement of this duty.
- (3) The legislature shall provide adequate remedies for the protection of the environmental life support system from degradation and provide adequate remedies to prevent unreasonable depletion and degradation of natural resources."

Our studies and others which have been presented to you suggest that the root cause for the steady decline in our air quality, water quality, open space, human and wildlife habitat and the steady increases in pollution, environmental degradation, noise, taxes, traffic and human conflicts is human population density relating to growth. It takes a variable number (X) of individuals to make a viable, self sustaining, clean and healthy community. Beyond that, clean and healthy starts to decline.

Here in the Bitterroot we reached that point a long time ago. We who call ourselves Friends of the Bitterroot have been working for years to preserve what we have left. For years we have focused on our National Forests, rivers, streams and wildlife. More recently, due to numerous studies done by water and air quality experts including State and local officials we've gotten involved in growth planning and zoning.

It has become obvious to us that we can't continue to grow like we have in the last 10 years or so without losing the qualities of life we cherish. We natives aren't reproducing fast enough to explain it. We believe growth is coming from newcomers moving here for the same values we cherish. Some local developers and out of state profiteers have been cashing in on that growth. The way to get a handle on it is to stop creating smaller and smaller lots and building more and more spec. houses, an open invitation to more growth and urban sprawl. The fundamental problem is that a few wealthy developers are profiting handsomely at the expense of the many.

We believe that you, as our elected officials, have the responsibility to protect the public health, safety and our constitutional rights. We believe that subdivision regulations require you to deny the variance requests in this particular instance and to deny subdivision applications altogether if those rights are infringed upon.

Sincerely,

5/27/2008